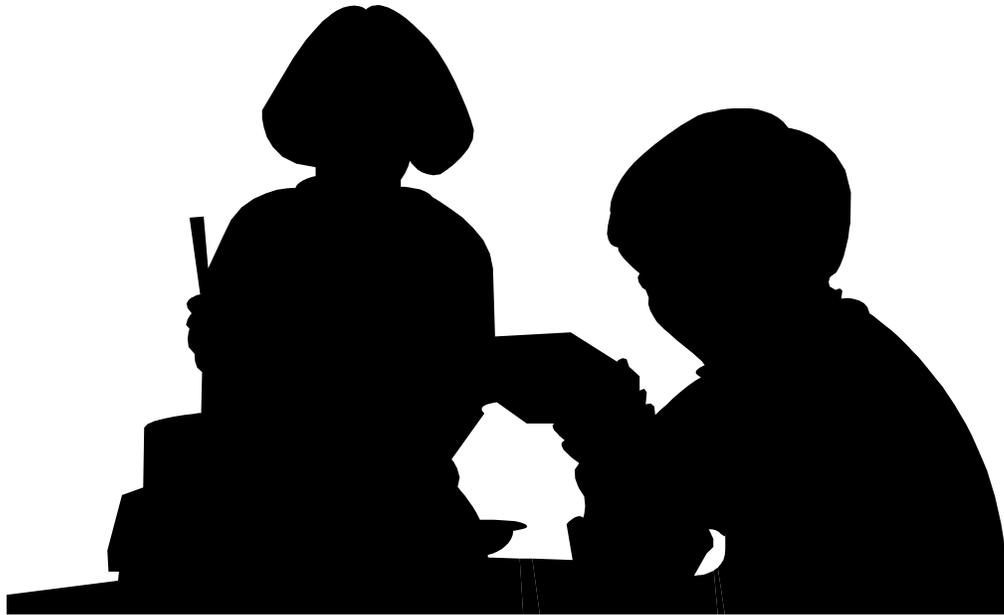


Parents Of Preschoolers, Inc.

9000 Rockville Pike, Building 64
Bethesda, Maryland 20892
301-496-5144
301-594-2978 (fax)



Parent Handbook

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I. PHILOSOPHY

We the staff at Parents of Preschoolers, Inc. recognize that childhood should be a time of happiness, learning, love, attention and fun. This center is designed to meet the emotional, social, physical and intellectual needs of all our children in a nurturing, loving and safe environment. Our program is dedicated to fostering the natural curiosity of students by encouraging them to explore, experiment, test ideas, and solve problems creatively. The unique characteristics of each and every child are highly valued here at POPI and their interests and skills are nurtured by our very experienced and talented team of early childhood professionals.

Our child caring philosophy is based on a program which promotes freedom and flexibility for the children. We stress the ability for children to experience “hands-on” learning and in turn this allows the center to address the developmental stages of all children. We also value and stress the importance of each child’s self-esteem and self-confidence.

POPI respects and values the culture and heritage of all the children and their families. We have a very broad and diverse background of children attending our center in addition to a very culturally diverse staff. This diversity allows us to enrich the curriculum and environment for all the children.

We believe that communication is a critical priority for the center. We believe in parents and staff working together for the benefit of the child. We endeavor to foster an atmosphere of open communication between home and school. Daily communication through conversation and written notes permit the staff and parents to form a team to assist in the child’s development.

Most importantly, POPI is a place where all children are respected and loved. It is a busy, fun and happy home away from home for the children.

II. MISSION STATEMENT

POPI is a coeducational, daycare center for ages 1 ½ months to 6 years, dedicated to fostering the natural curiosity of students, engaging them actively in the joy of learning and facilitating problem solving. Based on an understanding of child development, POPI’s program is cognitively, physically and creatively challenging. Valuing acceptance of a variety of viewpoints, the POPI community promotes socio-economic and cultural diversity. An environment of trust, cooperation and mutual respect encourages children to become increasingly independent thinkers and responsible contributors to an ever-changing multicultural world.

III. CENTER INFORMATION AND ORGANIZATION

A. Non-Discrimination Statement

POPI does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, pregnancy, national or ethnic origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, genetic information, or military service in the administration of our educational, admission, personnel, and financial aid policies, and all school-administered programs. Every reasonable effort will be made to

accommodate children who have been identified with special needs within the abilities of the school.

B. Center Staff

Director Paulina Alvarado
Assistant Director Nicole Queen

Educational/Classroom Staff

A list of current staff and their room assignments are available at the front desk.

C. Staff-Child Ratios

POPI meets or exceeds the following Maryland state regulations regarding staff-child ratios. Maryland state regulations require a 1:3 teacher to child ratio for children under the age of 2. For 2 year old children the requirement is for a 1:6 teacher to child ratio. For 3-4 year old children the requirement is for a 1:10 teacher to child ratio. For 5 year old children and above the requirement is for a 1:15 teacher to child ratio.

D. POPI/Board of Directors

All parents and legal guardians of a child or children enrolled in POPI are members of POPI. The participation of each member is needed and encouraged. Each member may expect to be asked to participate in one or more of the several areas necessary for the continuing operation of POPI, including board membership, committee membership, classroom participation, and fundraising. However, participation is voluntary.

The POPI Board of Directors consists of parents or legal guardians of children enrolled at POPI. All parents are eligible to vote for individuals to serve on the Board of Directors. All parent members are eligible to serve on the Board of Directors. All staff members are eligible to serve on the committees of the Board as full voting members. The POPI Director sends out a request for parents to stand for Board position elections and the parents respond accordingly. The elections are held in May of each year.

The Board of Directors consists of thirteen members – Chairperson, Personnel Director, Treasurer, two Co-Secretaries, two Co-Fundraisers, one Liaison to the NIH Childcare Board, three Preschool parent representatives (one from Rooms 2A/2B, one from Rooms 4A/4B, one from Rooms 5A/5B), Kindergarten Parent Representative, and Room 1 Parent Representative.

Board meetings are held monthly at the school on the third Thursday of the month. There are two meetings a year that are open to the whole corporation. One is in the fall and one is in the spring. Minutes from the Board meetings are posted on the POPI Listserv.

E. Communication

POPI has a listserv on which important information about the center is disseminated. It is crucial that POPI have current email addresses for all parents and legal guardians of currently enrolled children. Please read all communications that appear from the POPI listserv. The POPI Listserv is controlled by the POPI management. Parents who would like to post a message on the listserv need to contact the POPI Director or Assistant Director. In addition information and notices are posted on the bulletin board in the front lobby of the school. Information is also distributed in each child's plastic folder outside each classroom. Please check this folder on a regular basis.

F. Whom To Call About...

Absences

Classroom Teachers

Infant Room	(301) 451-6702
Classroom 1	(301) 451-6796
Pooh Bears, Ladybugs, Bears	
Classroom 2	(301) 451-6795
Classroom 4	(301) 451-6798
Classroom 5	(301) 451-6799
Kindergarten	(301) 451-6797
Nicole Queen	(301) 496-5144
Paulina Alvarado	(301) 496-5144

Board

A list of current board members and their contact information is available at the front office.

Fundraising

See list of current board of directors for contact information.

Billing Questions/Tuition/Financial Aid

Enrollment

Medications/Health

Parking

School Closure

Nicole Queen	(301) 496-5144
Paulina Alvarado	(301) 496-5144

Front Desk (301) 496-5144

IV. OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Hours of Operation and Scheduled Closings

We are open Monday through Friday, fifty-two weeks a year, from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, except for the following Federal holidays:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Presidents' Day

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

Columbus Day

Veterans Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Day

In addition the school will be closed for three professional days during the year. One of these days will be the day before the Montgomery County Public schools open in the fall, one will be the day after Thanksgiving Day, and one will be a professional day in the Spring. A calendar of school events including holiday parties, the Thanksgiving Pot Luck Dinner, open house, etc., will be available at the beginning of each school year.

**NIH Child Care Programs
Modified Hours of Operations - Opening and Closure Procedures**

The following procedures will be implemented as minimum standards to ensure that the NIH Child Care Programs are operating as normally as possible during adverse weather conditions (snow emergencies, severe icing conditions, floods, and hurricanes), natural disasters, and other disruptions of the Federal Government's operations (air pollution, disruption of power and/or water, interruption of public transportation, etc.).

When there are disruptions of the Federal Government operations, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will make announcements to the media as to whether Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are "open" or "closed," or operating under an "unscheduled leave," "delayed arrival," or "early dismissal" policy. During these situations, the NIH Child Care Programs hours of operation will be as follows:

Announcement	What Announcement Means	NIH Child Care Programs Hours of Operation
1. "Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN; employees are expected to report for work on time."	NIH Employees are expected to report for work on time.	The NIH Child Care Programs will open on time.
2. "Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN under an UNSCHEDULED LEAVE policy."	NIH Employees who cannot report for work may request unscheduled leave for their entire scheduled workday. NIH Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.	The NIH Child Care Programs will open on time.
3. "Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN under a DELAYED ARRIVAL policy. Employees should plan to arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive."	NIH Employees should plan their commutes so that they arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive. NIH Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.	The NIH Child Care Program MAY open no more than ONE hour later than they would normally open.
4. "Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are OPEN under a DELAYED ARRIVAL/UNSCHEDULED LEAVE policy. Employees should plan to arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive, and employees who cannot report for work may take unscheduled leave."	NIH Employees should plan their commutes so that they arrive for work no more than xx hours later than they would normally arrive. NIH Emergency employees are expected to report for work on time.	The NIH Child Care Program MAY open no more than ONE hour later than they would normally open.
5. "Federal agencies are CLOSED."	Federal agencies are closed.	The NIH Child Care Programs will be closed.

Disruptions After The Workday Begins

The Office of Personnel Management will provide the following announcement to the media when a disruption occurs after the workday begins.

Announcement	What Announcement Means	NIH Child Care Programs Hours of Operation
"Federal agencies in the Washington, DC, area are operating under an EARLY DISMISSAL policy. Employees should be dismissed by their agencies xx hours earlier than their normal departure time from work."	NIH Employees should be dismissed by their agencies relative to their normal departure times from work. For example, if a 3-hour "early dismissal" policy is announced, workers who normally leave their offices at 4:00 p.m. should leave at 1:00 p.m.	The NIH Child Care Programs will close xx hours earlier than their normal closing time. Parents may be notified by the centers.
"Federal Agencies in the Washington, D.C. area are dismissed at a Specific Time."	NIH Employees should be dismissed according to instructions of the NIH Director.	The NIH Child Care Programs will close one hour after the specific dismissal time announced by the NIH Director.

These procedures are based on the principle that the business of the Federal Government is vital to serving the public everywhere, however we must do so without compromising the safety of our employees. POPI will designate emergency employees to support the center in the event of a modified opening or closure situation.

Snow Policy

See chart above.

B. Enrollment

POPI is available only to families who are Federal employees of NIH or other agencies. It is not available for the families of government contractors. If parents leave NIH or another Federal agency, their child can no longer be enrolled at POPI. A grace period of 2 months will be given upon leaving federal service to arrange for new child care.

Of note, parent participation in POPI is needed and encouraged. Opportunities to participate in school activities are numerous and include, helping with classroom activities, fundraising, and board memberships.

A sample enrollment agreement is included below:

POPI's Enrollment Agreement

1. Enrollment Policy/Agreement

A sample enrollment agreement is included below:

Dear Parents,

Please read this agreement carefully. If you do not understand any provisions please ask the Center Director to clarify them for you.

This enrollment agreement constitutes a legal contract between POPI and **PARENT'S NAME** the parent(s) of **CHILD'S NAME**.

In return for child care services accorded to **CHILD'S NAME** by POPI, we (I) agree to the following conditions and terms:

TUITION SCHEDULE

To pay the bi-weekly fee of **\$ TUITION AMOUNT** based on the sliding fee scale currently in effect. Payment is due biweekly, every other Tuesday. This payment is for the two week period beginning the following Monday. Payment can also be made monthly. Your monthly fee is **\$ TUITION AMOUNT**. Monthly tuition is due on the last bi-weekly tuition date of the month for the following month (i.e. you pay for August in July). **Payment received after Friday of the week tuition is due will be assessed a \$20.00 late fee.** If this late fee is not included in your tuition payment it will be deducted from your deposit. Tuition may be paid by check or direct withdrawal to POPI. If payment by check is returned unpaid you will owe a service charge of twenty dollars in addition to other amounts due. After two returned checks you will be required to pay by money order. Payments must be made directly to the office.

If POPI has not received payment by the thirteenth day after payment is due, your child's enrollment at the school will be terminated and their space will be offered to another child. You will not be entitled to a refund of your deposit if your child's enrollment is terminated due to nonpayment of tuition.

DEPOSITS

You are required to pay a two week deposit. This deposit is applicable to the child's last two weeks in the school upon receipt of thirty (30) days written notification of termination. **You must provide the school with thirty days notice when you withdraw your child.**

The amount of **\$ DEPOSIT AMOUNT** is currently held on deposit.

Any miscellaneous charges due the school (for late pick up, returned checks, etc.) will be withheld from the deposit.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE MARYLAND CHILD CARE ADMINISTRATION

To comply with the regulations of the Maryland Department of Human Resources Child Care Administration prior to entering the school each child must have a physical examination and ongoing immunizations against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, HIB and measles (rubella and rubeola) unless contraindicated for a medical reason.

PROGRAM HOURS OF CARE

The Corporation will provide childcare between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with the following exceptions:

1. All Federal Holidays
2. The Friday following Thanksgiving
3. Spring Professional Day TBA by Director
4. The fourth Monday in August-Professional Day for Teachers

Full tuition is due for all weeks in which holidays or professionals days occur. Full tuition is also due for all vacations and illnesses.

LATE PICK UP PENALTIES

If your child is picked up after 6:00 p.m., you will owe a late fee of \$1.00 for each minute you are late. This fee is per child NOT per family. This late fee is payable to the afternoon staff and is due no later than three days after written notification. If payment is not received then **it will be deducted from your deposit. If your child is picked up late more than three times in a thirty day period your child's enrollment will be terminated and no refund of deposit will be given.**

ADJUSTMENT AND TRIAL PERIOD

Your child is accepted at the school for a trial period of one month. **If at any time during the first month, the classroom teachers and the Executive Director determine that your child is unable to adjust to the school's program, the preschool may terminate your child's enrollment.**

We will make all reasonable attempts to work with you and your child to solve adjustment problems. If your child's enrollment is terminated under this section, POPI will refund a portion of the tuition, including the deposit, prorated on a daily basis for the portion of the month remaining after your child's enrollment has been terminated.

TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

This contract may be terminated in the following ways:

- 1) Upon written notification of no less than thirty (30) days*
- 2) For reasons of nonpayment by the thirteenth day after payment is due*
- 3) If your child has been picked up late more than three times in any month*
- 4) If, in the judgment of the classroom teachers and the Director, the preschool program does not meet the needs of your child*
- 5) Within two months of change of employment where the parent is no longer an NIH employee*

Please sign and return this agreement to the Director prior to Month Day, Year. This agreement is in effect from Month Day, Year through Month Day, Year.

You are responsible for notifying the Director in the event that the financial situation on which the fee is based changes and a reevaluation of your tuition rate is necessary.

I have received a copy of the Corporation's by-laws and I understand that I become a voting member of POPI on the day my child is enrolled. I have read and agree to all the provisions of this contract.

Parent/Guardian's Signature

Date

2. Withdrawal of Children From the Center

We ask that the center be given at least 30 days written notice prior to withdrawal of a child from POPI. Withdrawal forms are available in the front office. The security deposit that was received when the child enrolled in POPI will be used as payment for the last two weeks the child is enrolled in POPI.

3. Termination of Enrollment

POPI reserves the right to suspend or, in an extreme situation, terminate a child's enrollment if and when his/her behavior is deemed to be detrimental or destructive to the normal functioning of the program. Termination shall take place only with the approval of the Director and only after all efforts to resolve the difficulties have failed.

The following procedures for child termination will be followed in the event a teacher perceives the program does not meet the needs of the child. The teacher will:

- a) Bring discussion of the problem to a staff meeting to obtain additional input and identify a consistent approach among staff members for working with the child.
- b) Staff members will notify the parent(s) when a problem arises and hold a conference with the involved parent(s) and staff within two school days of the problem being brought to the staff meeting.
- c) Teachers will document through written observation the child's behavior and/or needs throughout at least two separate school days. These observations will be shared with the child's parent(s).
- d) In the event that steps a-c have been taken, and POPI determines it cannot meet the needs of the child, it reserves the right to terminate the child's enrollment. The school will refund any deposits or tuition payments, pro-rated as of the date of termination and mailed within two weeks of your child's termination date.

4. Progression of Children

Infant-Toddler Program

There are four rooms in the Infant-Toddler Program. The Infant Room is designed for children from the age of 1 ½ months to 12 months. The Pooh Bear Room is designed for children from the age of 12 months to 18 months. The Ladybug Room is designed for children from the age of 18 months to 24 months. The Bear Room is designed for children from the age of 24 months to 36 months. These age ranges are for guidance purposes only and are reflective more of the developmental stage of the child rather than chronological age. Children are transitioned to the next room when it is developmentally appropriate and when there is space in the next room. Every effort is made to make sure children are transitioned to the next room when it is developmentally appropriate within the constraints of space availability.

Parents will be notified when their child is going to start the transition process. Children are transitioned gradually over the course of a week from one room to the next. During the week the child will spend two hours a day in the new classroom. The two hour intervals are staggered throughout the week in order for the child to experience different portions of the day in the new class.

Preschool Program

There are 6 classrooms in the Preschool Program. Classroom 2A and 2B have 15 children each and are licensed to have 15 children each. Classroom 4A and 4B have 15 children each and are licensed to have up to 18 children each. Classroom 5A and 5B have 15 children and are licensed to have 18 children each. Children stay in each preschool classroom for 2 years providing a mixed –aged (3 to 5 year old) environment.

Kindergarten Program

There is one Kindergarten Room with 30 children. Enrollment in the kindergarten will only take place in March for the upcoming school year. POPI Kindergarten is fully licensed and accredited by the Maryland State Department of Education. The Kindergarten school year is from June to June. Children graduating in June will not be allowed to stay on during the summer as the new class kindergarten class matriculates at this time.

C. Fees

1. Security Deposit

A two-week deposit is required when the child is accepted into the school. This deposit is applicable to the child's last two week tuition upon receipt of a thirty days written notification of termination.

2. Tuition

A current tuition schedule is available in the front office. POPI does have a sibling discount rate; please see current fee schedule for these rates.

3. Method of Payment

There are two payment options - biweekly payments or monthly payments. POPI strongly encourages the use of direct withdrawal.

Biweekly Payments

Tuition is due every other Tuesday, and payments are for the two week period which begins the following Monday. Individuals making payments after Friday of the week in which the tuition is due will be assessed a \$20.00 late fee, unless previous arrangements have been made with the Director. If this late fee is not included in the tuition payment it will be deducted from the security deposit. Parents will be assessed a \$20.00 fee for returned checks. Should this occur twice, cash or a money order will be required for four successive tuition payments. Payment must be made directly to the office. Parents may also use the direct tuition withdrawal option to pay their child's tuition.

Monthly Payments

Tuition is due on the last biweekly tuition date of the month for the following month (i.e. payment for the August is made in July). Individuals making payments after Friday of the week in which the tuition is due will be assessed a \$20.00 late fee, unless previous arrangements have been made with the Director. If this late fee is not included in the tuition payment, it will be deducted from the security deposit. Parents will be assessed a \$20.00 fee for returned checks. Should this occur twice, cash or a money order will be required for four successive tuition payments. Payment must be made directly to the office. Parents may also use the direct tuition withdrawal option to pay their child's tuition.

Tuition payments must be made even if a child is absent for vacation or due to illness.

If POPI has not received payment by the thirteenth day after payment is due, your child's enrollment at the school will be terminated and their space will be offered to another child. You will not be entitled to a refund of your deposit if your child's enrollment is terminated due to nonpayment of tuition.

4. Transitions

There will be instances when a child will not be able to move up from one classroom to the next on or before their birthday. If that is the case, tuition will be adjusted according to the child's age, regardless of their classroom assignment. If your child's birthday falls before or on the fifteenth (15th) of the month, the tuition will be adjusted at the beginning of that month. If your child's birthday falls after the fifteenth (15th) of the month, the tuition will be adjusted the following month.

5. Activity Fee

There is an annual activity fee that is due in September of each year. This fee covers the cost of bus transportation for field trips. Please be aware that there might be an additional fee collected at the time of the field trip to cover the cost of admission fees. The amount of this fee will be disclosed at the parent orientation in September of each year.

D. Financial Aid

POPI's financial aid program is designed to assist families with financial need. Eligible families receive a discount on preschool tuition only. Financial Aid discounts do not apply to children two year and younger or to children in the Kindergarten. Sibling discount rates are not given on financial aid rates. **Families must apply for financial aid every year.**

How to Apply for Financial Aid (ONLY applies to the preschool program)

Families must meet the income requirements. Income requirements are available in the front office. If families meet the income requirements, they must fill out a financial aid application and provide current Tax Returns for both parents (W-2's are not accepted.) All completed forms must be received by May 1st. **Forms MUST be given to the Director or Assistant Director so they can be dated and time stamped.**

How Financial Aid is Awarded

If families meet the income requirements, grants are awarded on a first come first serve basis. **There are a limited number of scholarships available.**

E. Arrival and Dismissal

1. Sign In/Out

At the entrance to each classroom is a sign in and sign out sheet. Parents are asked to sign their child in at drop off and sign out their child at pick up.

2. Drop-off and Pick-up Procedure

Please take your child all the way into the classroom in the morning. We can only allow children to leave the school with a parent or an adult who has been authorized to pick up the child. We must have this authorization in writing. When picking up children from the playground everyone must exit the playground through Room 5.

Children must be picked up by 6:00 PM. There is a charge of \$1.00 for every minute past 6:00PM. The late fee must be paid in full when picking up your child either in cash or a check made out to the teacher who is waiting with your child, not to POPI. If payment is not received then it will be deducted from the security deposit. NIH policy does not allow POPI to stay open past 6:00PM. **If a child is picked up late more than three times in a thirty day period, his/her enrollment will be terminated and no refund of deposit will be given.**

3. Authorization for Pick-Up

If someone other than a parent will be dropping off or picking up a child, this person must be identified on the Emergency Card. If this person changes, POPI must be notified immediately and the change made on the Emergency Card immediately.

4. Parking

Special permits that allow drop-off and pick-up of children outside Building 64 in the designated parking spaces are issued annually and can be obtained from the Director or the front office. This permit must be displayed at all times when parking in the designated spaces. Parking in any undesignated space or without a permit can result in a \$75.00 parking ticket. Permits **MUST** be returned when your child leave POPI.

If you are not an NIH employee you must fill out an “Extended Visitor’s Pass” application and a “Visitor’s Parking Pass” application. These two applications will give you an ID badge and a parking hanger. These applications are available at the front desk.

5. Absence

Please call the school before 9:00 AM if your child will be absent or late. The teachers need this information if, for example, they are waiting for a child to arrive before doing an activity, and the office needs this information for a lunch count.

G. School Routines

1. Clothing

Please label all of your child’s clothing. A complete set of extra clothing should be available at the school including an extra pair of shoes and socks. Please wash and return any clothing not belonging to your child that he/she brings home. We have an ever-dwindling supply of extra clothing. We are happy to accept donations of clothing your child has outgrown!

Children should be dressed properly during cold winter months; layers work well. Please send snow boots and snowsuits on snow days since we go outside even when there is snow. Boots are also useful during our spring “mud” season. It is helpful to have a sweater at school, especially in the spring and fall, when the temperatures vary throughout the day. During the summer months your child will need a bathing suit and a towel to enjoy outdoor water play activities. Children who are not toilet-trained need to bring in swim diapers.

Casual clothing that can withstand the wear and tear of an active day is encouraged for both boys and girls. Our children are very active and play in sand, mud, paint, etc. It is also recommended that children come in “self-help” clothing, i.e. elastic waistbands, easy to pull up clothing. We encourage the children to dress themselves and they (and we) appreciate clothing that makes this task easier.

2. Lost and Found

Unclaimed clothing and miscellaneous supplies are kept in clothes containers in each of the classrooms. Periodically, items without nametags that are not claimed will be donated to a charitable organization.

3. Birthday Parties

You are invited to help your child celebrate his/her birthday at school. Please arrange a mutually convenient time for you and your child’s teacher. We ask that celebrations be limited to cake or other refreshment. Please do not distribute party favors.

POPI is a small community and it is hurtful for children to be excluded from special events. This is particularly true when only a few children are not invited.

When planning a social function for your child, we strongly suggest observing the following guidelines.

If finance, space, and energy permit, some families choose to invite the whole class.

Otherwise, please consider the following:

- a) inviting fewer than half the class members
- b) inviting all the boys or all the girls
- c) inviting fewer than half the boys or fewer than half the girls

Please do not exchange invitations and presents at school.

4. Toys

We ask that children do not bring toys to school as they can cause conflicts. Your child may bring a stuffed animal or doll that he/she needs for naptime.

5. Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of our curriculum. For local trips, parents and teachers will drive the children in their cars. Whenever a child leaves the school, parents will be notified and are required to provide written consent. All children under forty pounds, or who are under four years of age, are required to be in a car seat. Booster seats are needed for children over forty pounds. Parents are welcome on trips and we invite you to join your child's class on an excursion. On certain occasions, such as the summer swimming program, private buses will be used under the supervision of staff members. There is an activity fee due at the beginning of each school year to help cover the cost of the buses.

6. Meals

POPI provides breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack. Weekly menus are posted on the school listserv and on a bulletin board located in the front hall. Breakfast usually consists of cereal, milk and fruit. Teachers occasionally cook eggs, French toast, waffles, and a variety of other foods with the children. Lunch consists of a protein, a vegetable, bread, milk, and fruit. A nutritious snack is offered after naptime. Please do not send food to school with your child. We make a concerted effort to provide nutritious meals and snacks to minimize sweets and junk food. If your child is on a special diet for religious or health reasons, he/she may bring in their own food.

Parents are welcome to have lunch with their children; the cost is \$5.00. Please let your child's teacher know in advance if you will be having lunch in the classroom. Please check with your child's teacher before you make plans with your child. The office also needs to be notified so we may order an extra lunch for you. When you join us for lunch, we hope you will feel at home. Having a parent for lunch is a special treat for your child as well as for the other children in the room.

7. Summer Swimming

The summer swim program for the preschool and kindergarten classes at POPI has been a tradition for over 20 years. The program takes place every Tuesday and Thursday morning during the summer session.

Facilities and safety

Preschool children will use the outdoor wading pool -- starts out with a shallow end and goes to approximately 1 1/2 feet deep.

Kindergarten children use the larger outdoor pool with the slide, etc. -- starts out with a shallow beach entry and goes to approximately 3 feet deep. They can also use the water park. Please feel free to visit the pool if you would like to see the facilities firsthand.

Teachers will be stationed at various physical locations to ensure safety of children. Teachers are stationed on both the periphery of the pool and in the pool with the children. Two lifeguards will be present along with the five teachers to watch the kindergarteners.

Two teachers will be assigned to take children to and from the restroom.

Snacks will be provided by POPI and will be available to the children throughout the swim time.

8:45 AM - **Children should arrive at school no later than 8:45 AM.**

Children who arrive at that time or shortly before should already be fully dressed for the pool with sunscreen already on. Children who arrive at POPI very early in the morning generally change into their swim suits at school. See "equipment/supplies needed" for additional info.

9:00 AM - **Bus leaves POPI at 9 am sharp.**

There will be two buses to fit all preschoolers and kindergarteners plus the staff.

Parents can also choose to drive their children directly to the pool (see address and driving directions).

See also important information in the sections below on "Transportation" and "Missing the 9:00 AM bus"

9:00-9:30 AM - POPI children and staff must arrive at the pool between these times and have use of the pool until 10:30 AM.

10:30 AM - Children line up class by class to board the bus. Children who were driven directly to the pool by their parents can ride on the bus back to POPI.

11:00 AM - Bus returns to POPI. Children change to dry clothes at POPI.

Equipment/supplies needed

All items should be labeled with child's name:

swim suit

water shoes or sandals

towel

sunscreen

coverup/shirt for bus ride

set of dry clothes and shoes for rest of day

no toys are allowed in the pool

Children who arrive at 8:45 AM or shortly before should already be fully dressed for the pool with swim suits, water shoes or water sandals, and sunscreen already on. Please ask your

child's teacher to send the swim attire back home so your child can come dressed for the pool on the next swim date.

Children who arrive at POPI very early in the morning generally change into their swim suits at school. These children generally keep their swim attire at POPI for the whole week. The teachers dry the swim suits and towels after each use, and they are sent home with the child each weekend.

Rainy/Cold Days

The POPI staff will decide by 8:00 am if a swim trip will be cancelled for all classes due to rainy or cold weather.

Classroom teachers can also use their judgment in deciding to stay at school on a cold day, even if other classrooms to the pool.

To find out whether your child's class will be attending the pool, please call the classroom teacher either at the classroom's direct phone number or through POPI's general number: 301-496-5144.

Transportation

BUS -- POPI is able to provide bus transportation only for the children and teachers.

Parents are welcome to visit/assist at pool, but must drive to pool on their own.

Car -- You can drive your child(ren) directly to the pool, if desired. General directions are provided beneath the pool address. Children who are driven to the pool by their parents can ride the bus back to POPI.

Missing the 9:00 AM bus

The bus leaves POPI at 9:00 AM sharp. If your child misses the bus, you can drive him/her directly to the pool. If you are not able to do that, please bring your child to POPI at 11:00 AM, when the teachers and students have returned.

Pool address and driving directions

Rockville Municipal Swim Center
Department of Recreation and Parks
355 Martins Lane
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: 240-314-8750
URL: <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/swimcenter/>

Directions, as provided in the Rockville Recreation Guide:

Rt. 28 West (W. Montgomery Ave.) toward I-270.
Turn right onto Mannakee St.
Turn right onto Martins Lane.
Entrance on right

The Swim Center is #62 on the map at:
<http://www.rockvillemd.gov/parks-facilities/index.html>

The POPI staff hopes that everyone will enjoy the swim program and have a great time!

8. Room Parents

Room parents are parents who have volunteered to help the teachers in each classroom. Each classroom has one room parent. He/she helps teachers organize chaperones for field trips, potlucks for holiday parties, teacher appreciation week in the spring, holiday gifts for the teachers. Room parents do not serve as voting members of the Board of Directors.

H. Discipline

POPI strives to create a safe and loving environment for children and to nurture their self-esteem. Teachers and staff at POPI praise and encourage good behavior and work to set appropriate limits and behavior expectations. If a child engages in behavior that is physically or verbally harmful to others he/she will be removed from the group and appropriate measures taken. An incident report will be generated for the child's parents and the center. The parents of the aggressor will be informed of the incident. If the child has harmed another child the parents of the other child will be informed of the incident, but not of the identity of the aggressor. Teachers will speak with the parents of the aggressor to work out a strategy for dealing with the behavior. If the child repeats the physically or verbally harmful behavior, the parents will be called and the child will need to be picked up immediately. Again, an incident report will be generated for the child's parents and the center. A formal conference will be scheduled with the teachers, the Director and the parents to discuss the problem and outline strategies to address the behavior. If the child repeats the physically or verbally harmful behavior again, the parents will be called and the child will need to be picked up immediately. The child will also be suspended for the following day. The parents will also be asked to consult a pediatrician or behavioral specialist. If the child persists in the physically or verbally harmful behavior a fourth time, at the Director's discretion the child may be removed from the center for the safety of the other children. Your deposit will be mailed to your home address within 10 business days of the child's termination date.

1. Biting Policy

Biting can be a normal part of development and is not a sign of a bad child or bad parents. However, biting is not an acceptable behavior and corrective actions will be taken immediately to stop this behavior.

Treatment of Bitten Child

When a biting incident occurs, the child is immediately comforted. Then first aid is initiated. First aid includes washing the area with soap and water even if there is no evidence of skin breakage. In addition, ice is applied. If there is a puncture wound, the parents will be notified immediately as a visit to the pediatrician is recommended. In the rare case of severe laceration or other damage, emergency medical personnel will be contacted.

An incident report will be generated for the child's parents and the center. Parents will not be told the identity of the biter.

Parents will have an opportunity to have a formal conference with the Director and the teachers to discuss the problem.

In the event that a bite is not detected by the staff, the parent may be the first to notice bite marks. Parents should notify the Director and the teachers of the injury as soon as possible. An incident report will be generated with the parents' assistance.

Treatment of Biter

The child is removed from the vicinity of the bitten child and, if necessary, physically controlled until the child is capable of self-control. The teacher will discuss how biting is wrong and how it feels to be bitten. Parents will be notified each time their child bites.

With repeat occurrences, a formal conference will be held with the teachers, parents, and the Director to outline strategies to address the biting behavior at POPI and at home. If the problem behavior continues, parents are requested to consult a pediatrician or behavioral specialist. If the problem behavior continues and the parents do not cooperate with the center's efforts, the child will be removed from the center for the safety of the other children for a period of time determined by the Director.

2. Parental Grievance Procedure

Communication between parents and staff is instrumental in assuring the best possible experience for your child and for your family. In the event that other suggestions outlined in this handbook are not sufficient in avoiding conflict, the following grievance procedures will be followed:

- a) When a problem arises, the parent(s) have the option of scheduling a meeting (which will be held within 2 working days) with any or all of the following:
 - i. The child's teacher
 - ii. The Director
- b) If the problem is not adequately addressed, the parent(s) may file a grievance in writing to the Board of Directors.
- c) If the Board of Directors does not resolve the problem after following the above procedures, you may contact the NIH Child Care Programs Manager, ORS by calling (301) 402-8180 to discuss your situation and receive consultation. The NIH Child Care Program Specialist does not have the authority to overrule a judgment decision made by the Board of Directors, however they can offer assistance to the Board in identifying alternate resolutions for similar issues should they arise in the future.
- d) At the end of this process, after every effort has been made to reach a resolution, parents may terminate their child's enrollment and waive the thirty day notification. Any remaining deposit on the child's account will be refunded two weeks after the termination date.

V. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

All POPI students must have current health and medical records on file. Early each fall, health department officials visit the school and require us to suspend students whose records are out-of-date. The State and County require a medical record fully completed by a licensed physician.

The following records are those required by the state of Maryland and Montgomery County for enrollment:

- a) All About Your Child, one time form.
- b) Health Inventory, updated annually.
- c) Health Inventory Addendum updated one time for students under age 6 and those entering the school that has ever lived in any of the zip codes identified on the form.
- d) Emergency Contact Form, updated annually. (See notes below)
- e) Permission to Administer Prescription Medication, updated annually by physician and parent. (See notes below)

- f) Permission to Administer Over-the-Counter Medication, updated annually by physician and parent. (See notes below)

A. Emergency Card

It is most important to fill out this card and return it to school immediately. This card **must** be on file before a child may start school. No student may participate in any school program without a current emergency card on file. **The school must be advised and a new emergency card filled out if there is a change in your address and/or your home or office telephone number. The names of persons who are authorized to pick up your child must also be provided and kept current.**

B. Medications

It is school policy to adhere to state and county guidelines for administration of medication in school. (Copies are available in the office.) **No prescription medication will be administered unless the medication is brought to school by a responsible adult, is properly labeled (see below), and is accompanied by a completed authorization form (signed by parent and physician). Physician authorization is also necessary, on a separate form, for administration of over-the-counter medications.** These forms are available in the office.

Any medication (including over-the-counter medications) given to a child during school hours must be in the **original pharmacy bottle/container** labeled with:

- a) the child's name
- b) the physician's name
- c) the name of the medication
- d) the dosage and times medication is to be given

If medication is received in unlabeled containers, parents will be called to come to school to administer the medication. Further, any changes in directions (medication, dosage, schedule, etc.) must be sent to the office with a new Authorization to Administer Prescription Medicine form signed by parent and physician.

All medications at school will be administered under the auspices of the teacher. A record is kept of the daily administration of each medication. **Children must stay home for the first day's administration of any new medication or dosage; the school will not assume responsibility for a first administration of any new medication or dosage.**

C. Accidents

In spite of rigid health and safety precautions, accidents do happen to children. For minor cuts and scrapes, a teacher in charge will administer rudimentary first aid – soap and water, bandages, ice, etc.

More serious accidents and any head injury require that a staff member fill out an accident report and take appropriate action. Parents are alerted if the injury seems serious, and are advised to come for their child and to seek medical attention. Parents are called in all cases of head or eye injury, even if the child is able to remain in school.

In an emergency situation, an ambulance will be called and the child transported to the nearest hospital. A POPI staff member will accompany the child to the hospital. Parents are asked to meet the ambulance at the hospital.

POPI cannot assume responsibility for obtaining medical care. Your current emergency card must be on file so that we can contact you or your emergency contact.

If an accident requires a child to see a physician, parents will be asked to complete a Student Accident Report form for the school's insurance. Family insurance is primary, and the school's insurance is secondary.

For allergic reactions, children are observed, and an antihistamine (such as Benadryl) may be given if indicated by parent or guardian and on the administration of over-the-counter authorization form. If severe reactions appear, an ambulance will be called and the child transported to the nearest hospital.

Those children with known anaphylactic reactions, who have medication in school, will be treated according to their individual care plans; usually this involves administering medication (such as an Epi-Pen), calling an ambulance and a parent, and emergency transport to the hospital.

D. Illness and School Attendance

Please call the school if your child will be absent due to illness, and specify the illness. Do not send your child to school if he/she has a temperature above 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit (37.75 degrees Celsius) within the past 24 hours.

Do not send your child to school if he/she is vomiting, has diarrhea, or a severe cold with cough and nasal discharge. If a child develops any of these symptoms while at school or shows other signs of illness, he/she will be removed from the classroom and a parent called to take the child home. We ask that parents keep a child home for 24 hours after he/she is fever free.

E. Communicable Diseases

Parents are required to notify the Director immediately when their child develops a communicable disease such as mumps, chicken pox, rubella, lice or scabies. This allows the director to take the appropriate actions to help minimize the spread of the disease. Parents will be informed of any communicable diseases, which have occurred among the children and the appropriate measures to minimize spread will be taken.

F. Lice

If lice or nits are discovered on a child's head, parents must come to pick the child up. Parents are responsible for proper treatment and removal of all lice and nits before a child may return to school. In addition, all clothing and bedding will be sent home with your child.

A letter will be sent to parents when cases of lice or nits have been identified at school. If there is a case of lice in your child's class, you will be asked to take home and wash all items of clothing and bedding.

G. Child Abuse and Neglect

As professionals, teachers are required by law to report all suspected cases of abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

VI. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES

In the event of an evacuation from Building 64, the children will be taken to the Natcher

Building/ Building 45.

In the event of a tornado warning or watch, all children will be moved into interior spaces and remain there until the warning or watch is over. The NIH fire department will notify the school when a warning or watch is in effect.

Emergency Guide For Parents: NIH Child Care Centers

In an Emergency situation at the NIH, emergency response personnel will make the determination to relocate, evacuate or “shelter in place” the children and staff of the three NIH Child Care Centers.

The NIH Emergency Management Branch has developed **Relocation** plans for each of the NIH Child Care Centers to alternate nearby sites. This relocation would be temporary, until the center can be re-occupied or until all children are picked up by parents.

In the event of an **Evacuation** of the NIH Campus, it is anticipated that parents or designated adults would retrieve children from the Centers or the Center Relocation site. Center staff would remain until all children are released to a parent or guardian. All parents should designate on Emergency Information forms the names of additional adults approved to pick-up a child, in case there is a disruption to the normal routine.

In an Emergency Situation when the need to “**Shelter in-Place**” is determined, the following guidelines will apply:

Sheltering in-place provides short term or longer-term care for children when normal routines are interrupted.

Facility notification for sheltering in-place will come from the NIH Division of Public Safety to the directors or designated staff in-charge of the Child Care Centers.

If directed, the Center Director will ensure that all doors and windows are closed and secured.

A sign will be posted on the front entrance to the facility informing parents/visitors of “Sheltering In-Place Emergency” and under what circumstances entry and exit will be permitted.

To minimize the introduction of outside air, it may be necessary to prohibit entry and exit. The Division of Public Safety will give specific instructions to the Center Director.

Telephone trees, e-mail distribution lists or some alternate method of communication with parents may be established and tested to relieve the number of phone calls that may be coming in to the center during this event.

If you have questions about these emergency procedures, please speak to the Center Director, or call the NIH Child Care Programs Manager at 301-402-8180.